

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 00671 01 OF 02 040240Z

67

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 SAM-01 IO-14 SAB-01 AID-20 DRC-01

MC-02 ACDA-19 EB-11 DOTE-00 /152 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9692

INFO USCINCSO

PAN CANAL

USUN 421

USIA IMMEDIATE

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ

SUBJ: PRESS ITEM: U.S. PROFESSOR CRITICIZES U.S. COLONIAL
ATTITUDE IN PANAMA

SUMMARY: PANAMA STAR AND HERALD, ENGLISH LANGUAGE
NEWSPAPER, SUNNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, CARRIES LONG ARTICLE
BY E. BRADFORD BURNS, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES, WHICH
ACCORDING TO PAPER IS REPRINTED FROM JANUARY 1974
ISSUE OF CURRENT HISTORY, ON PANAMA'S STRUGGLE FOR
INDEPENDENCE. ARTICLE IS VERY SYMPATEHETIC TO PANAMA
AND CRITICAL OF U.S. PRESENCE IN CANAL ZONE AND
TREATMENT OF PANAMANIAN. AUTHOR STATES HE CALLED
AT AMERICAN EMBASSY IN PANAMA DURING AUGUST 1973
WHERE HE TALKED WITH ONE OF "RANKING OFFICIALS"

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PAGE 02 PANAMA 00671 01 OF 02 040240Z

WHO INFORMED HIM ABOUT INHERENT INABILITY OF PANAMA

TO OPERATE CANAL AND WHO SCORED PANAMANIAN "COVETOUSNESS."
COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS NOT, AS YET, BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE
THAT BURNS VISITED THE EMBASSY.

END SUMMARY

1. SUNDAY EDITION (FEBRUARY 3) OF STAR & HERALD,
PANAMA'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER,
CARRIED FEATURE STORY BY E. BRADFORD BURNS, IDENTIFIED
AS PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES, ENTITLED "PANAMA'S STRUGGLE FOR
INDEPENDENCE." PAPER NOTES ARTICLE IS REPRINTED
FROM JANUARY 1974 ISSUE OF CURRENT HISTORY. ARTICLE
DISCUSSES PANAMA'S POSITION AND GOALS IN CURRENT
NEGOTIATIONS WITH U.S. FOR NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY.
ARTICLE DOES NOT APPEAR IN SISTER SPANISH LANGUAGE
NEWSPAPER, LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS
OF THIS MESSAGE QUOTE OR PARAPHRASE KEY PORTIONS OF
ARTICLE AS PUBLISHED STAR & HERALD.

2. BEGIN QUOTE: PANAMA IS NOT AN INDEPENDENT NATION.
SHE SEVERED CONNECTIONS WITH COLOMBIA ON NOVEMBER 3,
1903 ONLY TO FIND HER SOVEREIGNTY HEAVILY COMPROMISED
BY THE CONTROVERSIAL TREATY SIGNED 15 DAYS LATER BY
UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN HAY AND PHILIPPE
BUNAU-VARILLA, WHO PURPORTED TO REPRESENT PANAMA'S
INTERESTS. THAT TREATY GRANTED TO THE UNITED STATES IN
PERPETUITY A 10-MILE STRIP ACROSS THE ISTHMUS WITH
POWER AND JURISDICTION, INNER QUOTE, AS IF IT WERE THE
SOVEREIGN, CLOSE INNER QUOTE. MUCH OF PANAMA'S HISTORY
THEREAFTER CENTERED ON EFFORTS TO WIN TOTAL NATIONAL
SOVEREIGNTY, A GOAL REQUIRING THE RENEGOTIATION OF THAT
RESTRICTIVE TREATY AND A RETURN OF THE APPROXIMATELY
500 SQUARE MILES ON THE CANAL ZONE TO PANAMANIAN
JURISDICTION. THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES
TO BE RELUCTANT TO ABANDON OR RENEGOTIATE A TREATY WHICH
ITS OFFICIALS HAVE INTERPRETED AS PERMISSION TO EXERCISE
-- IN PRACTICE -- SOVEREIGN POWERS OVER ONE OF THE EARTH'S
MOST VALUABLE PIECES OF REAL ESTATE, THE CANAL ZONE.
END QUOTE.

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PAGE 03 PANAMA 00671 01 OF 02 040240Z

3. ARTICLE SUMMARIZES RECENT HISTORY OF ATTEMPTS TO WIN
SOVEREIGNTY OVER ALL NATIONAL TERRITORY, INCLUDING RIOTS
OF 1964, THE PROMISE OF A NEW TREATY, AND A DECADE OF
FRUSTRATION WITH DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS. ARTICLE COVERS UN
SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING IN MARCH 1973 AND NOTES THAT
US VETO, BEGIN QUOTE: STRENGTHENED THE IMAGE OF THE
UNITED STATES IN THE EYES OF MOST OF THE WORLD AS A, BEGIN

INNER QUOTE, COLONIALIST, END INNER QUOTE, POWER.
IT THWARTED PANAMA'S ASPIRATIONS. END QUOTE.

4. BEGIN QUOTE: ALTHOUGH THE CANAL DIVIDES PANAMA
PHYSICALLY, IT UNITES ALL PANAMANIAN EMOTIONALLY.
NATIONAL ZENTIMENT UNIFORMLY DEMANDS THE REINCORPORATION
OF THE ZONE. NO ONE UNDERSTANDS THIS SENTIMENT BETTER
THAN GENERAL OMAR TORRIJOS HERRERA, THE STRONG MILITARY
FIGURE WHO TOOK COMMAND OF THE GOVERNMENT ON OCTOBER
11, 1968. HE HAS PROMISED THE PANAMANIAN, BEGIN INNER
QUOTE: BE ABSOLUTELY AND TOTALLY SURE OF IT: WE WILL
NOT SELL OUR FATHERLAND: WE WILL NOT SIGN ANY TYPE OF
TREATY NOR MAKE ANY TYPE OF AGREEMENT CONTRARY TO THE
BEST INTERESTS OF THE PANAMANIAN: CLOSE INNER QUOTE:
END QUOTE. ARTICLE OBSERVES THAT NATIONALISM INHERENT
IN THOSE STATEMENTS CHARACTERIZES THE TORRIJOS
GOVERNMENT, STRENGTHENS NATIONAL RESOLUTION AND FORECASTS
POTENTIAL TROUBLE IF A SATISFACTORY TREATY IS NOT SIGNED
SOON. NATIONALISM AND DEFIANCE BRING TOGETHER LARGE
AND DIVERSE GROUPS OF PANAMANIAN FROM THE COMFORTABLE
ELITES TO THE MARGINAL MASSES BEHIND THE APPEALING LEADER-
SHIP OF THE YOUNG GENERAL WHO IS DETERMINED TO REWRITE
THE TREATY. BEGIN QUOTE: GIVEN THE POWERFUL EMOTIONAL
APPEAL WHICH THE ISSUE EXERTS IN PANAMA, THE POSITION OF
THE TORRIJOS GOVERNMENT IS REMARKABLY MODERATE. END QUOTE.

5. ARTICLE UNDERSCORES PANAMANIAN REFUSAL TO ACCEPT
"PERPETUITY" OF CANAL CONCESSIONS AND NOTES FURTHER
THAT UNILATERAL INTERPRETATION OF TREATY BY USG HAS
ANGERED PANAMANIAN WHO RESENT THE ARROGANCE OF THE
POWERFUL NATION WHICH DISREGARDS THE SMALLER AND
WEAKER NATIONS'S WISHES AND SUGGESTIONS. IN THE
PANAMANIAN MIND, THE UNITED STATES RUNS THE CANAL ZONE
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PAGE 04 PANAMA 00671 01 OF 02 040240Z

LIKE A COLONIAL ENCLAVE IN DISREGARD OF PANAMANIAN
OWNERSHIP, ASPIRATIONS, AND SENSITIVITIES. THE COMPLEX
OF MILITARY BASES WITH THEIR THOUSANDS OF PERSONNEL
BELIES THE TREATY STIPULATION THAT TROOPS MAY BE STATIONED
IN THE ZONE ONLY IN TIME OF WAR. ARTICLE ALSO COMES DOWN
HARD ON USE OF CANAL ZONE AS PRIVILEGED AREA BY USG TO
SEIZE AND HOLD SHIPPING (AT BEHEST OF CHILEAN JUNTA IN
MOST RECENT EXAMPLE) IN VIOLATION (FROM PANAMANIAN VIEW)
OF THE CANAL'S NEUTRALITY AND FREE, OPEN AND INDISCRIMINATE
SERVICE TO WORLD SHIPPING.

6. ARTICLE COVERS ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF CANAL ZONE AND
EARNINGS FROM CANAL OPERATIONS IN VEIN FAMILIAR TO
DEPARTMENT, CITING VARIOUS SOURCES INCLUDING
THE LATIN AMERICAN DIGEST, REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION

FOR LATIN AMERICA AND USG MATERIALS. STRESS LAID ON
PITTANCE RECEIVED BY PANAMA. ARTICLE QUESTIONS USGE
ACCOUNTING FOR CANAL OPERATIONS, NOTING THAT
USG CLAIMS CANAL NOT YET PAID FOR. BEGIN QUOTE: THE
ORIGINAL CANAL COST \$386 MILLION OF WHICH WASHINGTON
SOBERLY NOTES THAT \$317 MILLION REMAIN UNPAID
AFTER 60 YEARS. THE POSSIBILITY OF FANCY JUGGLING OF
FIGURES EXISTS HERE. ONE WONDERS WHAT SORT OF BUSINESS
AMORTIZES ITS LOAN AT LESS THAN 20 PERCENT IN A 60
YEAR PERIOD. USING STATISTICS PUBLISHED BY THE PANAMA
CANAL COMPANY, PANAMANIAN ECONOMISTS POINT OUT THAT
THE ORIGINAL INVESTMENT OF \$386 MILLION AND ANNUAL
INTEREST AT TWO PERCENT WERE PAID OFF BY 1954, AND NOTE
THAT BETWEEN 1955 AND 1970, THE PANAMA CANAL COMPANY
EARNED \$678 MILLION MORE. END QUOTE. SECTION CONCLUDES
BY NOTING, BEGIN QUOTE: HOWEVER, IMPORTANT AS JOBS AND
REVENUES ARE FOR PANAMA'S DEVELOPMENT, THE FINANCIAL
CONSIDERATION DOES NOT WEIGH HEAVIEST IN THE MINDS OF
PATIENT PANAMANIAN. PANAMA IS MUCH MORE CONCERNED TO
ELIMINATE A, BEGIN INNER QUOTE, COLONIAL ENCLAVE, END
INNER QUOTE, REGARDED AS AN AFFRONT TO NATIONALITY.

END QUOTE.

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 00671 02 OF 02 040245Z

67

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 SAM-01 IO-14 SAB-01 AID-20 DRC-01

MC-02 ACDA-19 EB-11 DOTE-00 /152 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9693

INFO USCINCSO

PAN CANAL

USUN 422

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 PANAMA 0671

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7. ARTICLE DESCRIBES THIS "COLONIAL ENCLAVE" IN UNFLATTERING TERMS, NOTING THAT ENTIRE SITUATION BEARS AN ALL TOO FAMILIAR SIMILARITY TO THE EUROPEAN TREATMENT OF TURKEY AND CHINA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CENTURY. BEGIN QUOTE: THAT COLONIAL MENTALITY UNFORTUNATELY PERVADES OUR DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND MORE PARTICULARLY THE PENTAGON, WHOSE ATTITUDES TOWARD PANAMA AND HER ASPIRATIONS ARE OFTEN CONDESCENDING. THE PLOY HAS BEEN TO AVERT TROUBLE BY ASSIDUOUSLY WOOLING KEY BUSINESS AND MILITARY LEADERS, THE FORMER WITH LUCRATIVE CONTRACTS TO SUPPLY THE CANAL ZONE, THE LATTER WITH HARDWARE, JUNKETS AND TRAINING. THE MANEUVER HAS WORKED IN THE PAST BUT THERE IS REASON TO QUESTION WHETHER IT WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE 1970'S. END QUOTE.

8. AUTHOR COMMENTS ON HIS VISIT TO AMERICAN EMBASSY AT PANAMA, BEGIN QUOTE: SOME MINOR BUSINESS PROMPTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 PANAMA 00671 02 OF 02 040245Z

ME TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN PANAMA CITY IN AUGUST 1973, WHERE ONE OF THE RANKING OFFICIALS, BEGIN INNER QUOTE, ENLIGHTENED, END INNER QUOTE, ME ON PANAMA. IN HIS OPINION, THE PANAMANIAN LACKED THE ABILITY TO OPERATE THE CANAL AND APPARENTLY WERE INNATELY INCAPABLE OF ACQUIRING NEEDED SKILLS. ACCORDING TO HIS OBSERVATIONS, THE MAJOR DEFECT IN PANAMANIAN CHARACTER WAS COVETOUSNESS. THE PANAMANIAN WANTED EVERYTHING THAT WAS NOT THEIRS, SUCH AS THE ZONE, THE CANAL, THE INSTALLATIONS, EVEN THE HOUSES INHABITED BY UNITED STATES CITIZENS IN THE ZONE. END QUOTE. AUTHOR COMMENTED THAT LONG MONOLOGUE OF EMBASSY OFFICIAL HAD THE RING OF THE EXASPERATED COLONIAL OFFICIAL WHO HAS TRIED LONG AND DILIGENTLY TO BRING "CIVILIZATION" TO THE "NATIVES" ONLY TO FIND THAT THEY DO NOT APPRECIATE HIS EFFORTS.

9. ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH SUMMARY OF TREATY NEGOTIATIONS AND POSITIONS OF BOTH PANAMA AND USG, BASED LARGELY ON INFORMATION IN PUBLIC DOMAIN. ARTICLE CONCLUDES, BEGIN QUOTE: PANAMA'S POSITION IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS IS FIRMLY ROOTED IN NATIONALISM, THE MOST POTENT FORCE IN LATIN AMERICA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND ONE WHICH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE CONSISTENTLY FAILS TO UNDERSTAND OR APPRECIATE. PERHAPS JORGE E. ILLUECA, PANAMA'S LEADING AUTHORITY

IN INTRNATIONAL LAW, BEST SUMMARIZED PANAMA'S GOALS
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONALISM WHEN HE CONCLUDED,
BEGIN INNER QUOTE: WHAT PANAMA DESIRES IS A PANAMANIAN
CANAL RUN BY THE PANAMANIAN FOR THE PANAMANIAN TO
BENEFIT PANAMA. END INNER QUOTE TEAM ONLY BY EXERTING
HER EFFECTIVE SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ZONE AND CANAL WILL
PANAMA GAIN THE INDEPENDENCE SHE SO HOPEFULLY PROCLAIMED
70 YEARS AGO. END QUOTE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, TERRITORIAL REVERSION, AGREEMENTS, SOVEREIGNTY, NATIONALISM, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, SELFDETERMINATION, BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, NATIONAL UNIFICATION, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PANAMA00671
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740258/aaaacccq.tel
Line Count: 286
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 JUN 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <02 JUL 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS ITEM: U.S. PROFESSOR CRITICIZES U.S. COLONIAL ATTITUDE IN PANAMA
TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005